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ABSTRACT

This report discusses leadership development as a major area of the new mission statement developed by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). It includes a brief overview of the March 2001 AACC Leadership Summit and presents a summary of goals and strategies. In 2001, AACC renewed its mission statement to address the impending shortage of community college leaders resulting from an unprecedented number of retirements over the next decade. The new AACC mission statement includes leadership development as a strategic action area and goal. Following the March summit, which discussed the community college leadership crisis, the AACC established a Leadership Task Force that identified three priorities: (1) recruiting presidents and upper-level managers; (2) preparing presidents and upper-level managers; and (3) sustaining presidents and upper-level managers. For each priority, the task force outlined desired outcomes and action strategies. This report also identifies a set of characteristics that describe effective community college presidents: knowledge of the community college mission, effective advocacy, administrative skills, community and economic development skills, and interpersonal skills. (RC)

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Leadership 2020: Recruitment, Preparation, and Support

Drafted by the Leadership Task Force of the American Association of Community Colleges

- Characteristics of Community College Leaders
- AACC Leadership Initiatives

This report discusses leadership development as a major action area of the new mission statement developed by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). It includes a brief overview of the March 2001 AACC Leadership Summit and presents a summary of goals and strategies outlined by the AACC Leadership Task Force that followed on the work of the summit.

If you have questions about this report or would like to comment on it, please contact Margaret Rivera, Vice President, Member and Information Services at mrivera@aacc.nche.edu or by calling 202/728-0200 x 234.

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Background
The Problem Statement
The Action Plan
Reference

Background

Leadership as Part of AACC Mission

In 2001, the American Association of Community Colleges renewed its mission statement to respond to changes taking place in higher education. One major concern for community colleges is the impending shortage of college leaders resulting from an unprecedented number of retirements over the next decade. Community colleges will need to focus on finding and developing qualified leaders to replace those retiring. The new AACC mission statement therefore includes leadership development as a strategic action area and goal, asserting that "diverse, qualified leaders are available at all levels of our nation's community colleges. They understand the community college mission, values, and vision and have the ability to implement them."

The AACC research brief The Critical Impact of Impending Retirements on Community College Leadership (Shults 2001) reported that 45 percent of current presidents plan to retire by 2007. In the next 10 years, community colleges will need to replace 800 of the 1,150 presidents. Yet the preparation of presidents and other community college leaders has declined, and the number of people prepared to step into leadership roles at higher levels, including the presidency, has dramatically diminished. The number of advanced degrees conferred in community college administration decreased 78 percent between 1983 and 1997.

Leadership Summit

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In March 2001, AACC CEO George R. Boggs convened a Leadership Summit for community college leaders to come together to discuss the leadership crisis. Participants included college presidents, AACC board members, members of leadership programs, and representatives of university doctoral programs. The group addressed a variety of issues, including:

- the leadership pipeline
- diversity
- leader skills and knowledge base
- leadership programs
- program delivery methods
- partnerships

Leadership Task Force

AACC board chair Pamela J. Transue, President of Tacoma Community College, Washington, selected leadership development as a priority for her term as chair, and she created the Leadership Task Force to follow on the work of the summit. The task force, chaired by Cynthia M. Heelan, President of Colorado Mountain College, began its work using the materials produced by the Leadership Summit.

The remainder of this document presents a summary of work by the AACC Leadership Task Force, including a statement of the problem and a resulting plan for action divided into three categories:

- Recruitment of presidents and upper-level managers
- Preparation of presidents and upper-level managers
- Support needed to sustain presidents and upper-level managers.

The Problem Statement

Retirements and changes in community colleges have created an urgency for developing future leaders.

Shults (2001) points out that because community colleges are losing not only CEOs but also administrative leaders and faculty leaders in the traditional leadership pipeline, the future of presidential leadership is uncertain.

The Action Plan

AACC members need to recruit, prepare, and support substantial numbers of diverse leaders through a variety of effective program paths, focusing on middle- to upper-level administrators, especially CEOs.

Recruitment of Presidents and Upper-Level Managers

Outcomes

The task force identified desired outcomes related to recruitment:

1. Member colleges will have a diverse pool of talented leaders for each position opening.

2. Middle-level managers will be identified and enticed to become upper-level managers and presidents.
3. New faculty members will be recruited to the field of community colleges. For example, graduate students will be made aware of teaching and administrative opportunities at community colleges and will be encouraged to pursue these opportunities.

Strategies

The task force identified the following strategies for achieving the outcomes identified above:

1. Create a Web-based registry similar to America's Learning Exchange. This registry will be a clearinghouse and career center describing people who are prepared for positions and jobs needing to be filled.

2. Design and implement a leadership-program database and present it on the AACC Web site. This Web page would inform interested people about the university programs available to study higher education administration or community college leadership.

3. Recruit new faculty and potential new middle- and upper-level administrators by developing an awareness campaign for university discipline-based departments. This campaign would describe opportunities within the community college world. This strategy would also include raising awareness at professional associations, for example listing community college positions in professional association magazines and at placement centers within universities.

All of these recruitment strategies will emphasize the importance of creating a diverse pool of candidates for middle- to upper-level positions in community colleges, especially the presidency.

Preparation of Presidents and Upper-Level Managers

Outcomes

1. The task force addressed the issue of preparation for middle- to upper-level leaders, especially CEOs, and named specific outcomes to be achieved:

   Design professional-development program content so that it identifies and reinforces the essential characteristics of effective community college leaders.

2. Establish an information clearinghouse of available program paths for middle- to upper-level leaders and presidents.

3. Create new opportunities in the form of leadership programs or certificates for middle- to upper-level staff and college presidents.

Strategies

The following strategies were identified as the most immediate activities needed to to achieve the outcomes related to preparation:

1. Develop a resource of available and effective program paths through a leadership-development-program Web page.

2. Identify local, state, and regional college leadership programs and share the models on the AACC Leadership Database.

3. Create a list of characteristics needed by community college presidents and identify essential program content for effective leadership programs.

4. Create partnerships with a variety of groups to implement effective programs.

Support for Presidents and Upper-Level Managers

Outcomes

It is well known that presidents seek professional support from time to time throughout their careers. Shults (2001) reported that community college presidents surveyed sometimes felt unprepared to deal with key aspects of their job. Sitting presidents reported attending a variety of professional-development activities offered by a number of providers, including state and local leadership programs. The task force addressed specific outcomes related to ongoing support for community college presidents and middle- to upper-level managers:

1. Provide assistance to new and continuing CEOs.

2. Establish renewal programs for middle- to upper-level leaders and presidents.

Strategies

The task force identified a variety of strategies to assist in achieving the outcomes for support:

1. Create programs that support current CEOs and assist them in staying current with trends.

2. Create an intervention service provided by ACCT and AACC for presidents and trustees who request assistance with difficult issues.

3. Work with the AACC Affiliated Councils to replicate their strong mentoring programs and to collect and disseminate information on the mentoring process.

4. Collaborate with ACCT to provide training for trustees and search committees regarding the selection process and support for a new president.

AACC and ACCT will collaborate in providing training for trustees and search committees regarding the selection process and presidential support.

Reference

Shults, Christopher. 2001. The Critical Impact of Impending Retirements on Community College Leadership. Research Brief Leadership Series, no. 1, AACC-RB-01-5. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community Colleges.

Characteristics of Community College Leaders

Among the preparation outcomes, the Leadership Task Force suggested developing a set of characteristics describing effective community college presidents.

Shults (2001) identified important skills for future leaders, including the ability "to bring a college together in the governing process, the ability to mediate, a good command of technology, and the ability to build coalitions."

The task force identified several additional categories of skills needing to be addressed in professional development programs: understanding the community college mission, effective advocacy, administrative skills, community and economic development skills, and interpersonal skills. The task force also addressed issues related to program format.

Essential Leadership Characteristics

Understanding and Implementing the Community College Mission

Understanding the community college mission, with its sense of serving the community through serving the common good, is crucial for successful community college presidents. Some specific areas of focus in professional-development programs should be

1. Understanding and implementing the role of the college within its community.
2. Developing a strong orientation toward community colleges.
3. Creating a student-centered environment.
4. Valuing and promoting diversity.

Effective Advocacy

Effective advocacy with communities, with philanthropists, and with legislators is a crucial area of competence for community college presidents. The following are specific abilities identified by the task force:

1. Approaches to legislative advocacy.
2. Philanthropic development through friend- and fundraising.
3. Effective use of data and research.

Administrative Skills

A variety of administrative skills were identified by the task force. These include working with people, working with specific areas of the college, and governance. The task force considered the following skills to be the most important:

1. Competent governance and organization skills. These skill areas would include board relations, board structures, and union and contract negotiations.

2. Understanding and implementing effective organizational development. This area would include institutional change, organizational development, and implementing quality-improvement programs. Inherent in this category is understanding the difference between leadership and management. Presidents need to know how to use data and research in decision making and extending quality-improvement programs for use in institutional effectiveness and as an approach to accreditation.
3. Strategic planning, setting priorities, and then delegating and empowering others.
4. Managing technology.
5. Implementing diversity.
6. Creating and leading a learning college.
7. Facility management, budget skills, understanding legal issues, and media and marketing programs.
8. Addressing personnel issues. Important aspects of this skill include hiring effectively, inspiring personnel, evaluating personnel, and motivating employees and are. Also involved is an awareness of professional development needs for faculty and staff, the importance of team building and of finding ways to celebrate and recognize staff accomplishments.
9. Appreciating the CEO role in academic leadership. This could include understanding trends in student success, understanding the principles of the learning college, implementing service learning programs, involvement in global awareness, and the assessment of student learning.

Community and Economic Development

Given the emphasis of community colleges on workforce issues and economic diversity, the next set of skills is crucial for community college presidents:

1. Developing linkages within the community and strengthening partnerships. Developing linkages to high schools and universities and ensuring curriculum transfer or securing baccalaureate and graduate courses offered by universities on community college campuses.
2. Understanding civic engagement on the part of students, staff, and the institution.
3. Developing strategies for community development.
4. Ability to implement workforce-development strategies and to understand the role of workforce development in the community college mission.
5. Ability to develop strategic alliances with business, industry, and government.

Personal, Interpersonal, and Transformational Skills

Personal skills involved in presidential leadership are extensive. The following list is the task force's set of priorities:

1. Job application and interviewing skills are essential to get the presidency.
2. Understanding the overwhelming nature of leadership is essential to keeping a presidency. Issues include being able to balance home and work, setting priorities, creating a sense of privacy, managing time, and retaining a sense of humor.
3. Maintaining a code of personal ethics.
4. Having political savvy, including the ability to build coalitions and to manage scarce resources. Ability to build collaborative relationships and to keep all levels and kinds of

people working together. Ability to work with college staff to develop a college vision, values, and mission and keep the college focused on that vision and mission.
5. Flexibility and negotiation skills.
6. Public speaking skills.
7. Being a "risk manager" and picking battles wisely.
8. Ability to "look" like a leader.
9. Ability to model diversity and to survive when you look different.
10. Ability to function in a way that demonstrates self-mastery, and to operate at the highest level of personal transformation. This ability can then become an important basis for institutional transformation.

All of these characteristics must be addressed in some fashion in effective professional-development programs.

Program Format

Both the Leadership Summit and the Leadership Task Force addressed important issues related to program format, including the following:

1. An effective program should be portable. This portability could include distance learning and competency-based programs and internships.
2. Mentoring components are crucial for an effective program. Mentoring can allow for effective role models and for networking.
3. Working professionals appreciate just-in-time education, such as that offered by effective MBA programs.
4. Time for personal reflection should be built in to the program.
5. Programs should be accessible, low cost, and high quality.

AACC Leadership Initiatives - Activities in Progress That Implement Task Force Outcomes and Recommended Strategies

A number of task force-recommended activities have already been initiated by AACC staff. The following activities are identified by category: recruitment, preparation, and support.

Recruitment Strategies

- Web Career Center and Job Bank. AACC's Web site offers an online Career Center and Job Bank. Colleges may post classified ads and, for a fee, search resumes posted by job seekers. People looking for a job at a community college may post resumes and forward information about job postings to friends.

- Leadership Program Database. In November 2001, AACC added a Web-based inventory of university-based higher education administration programs to the Career Center. The database currently contains more than 140 college and university degree programs. In Phase II of this project, currently underway, AACC will expand the database to include nondegreed leadership-development opportunities such as seminars, institutes, and workshops, such as those offered by AACC Affiliated Councils, NILD, and the League for Innovation in the Community College. Phase II data should be available on the Web by mid-2002.

- Community College Times - CareerLine. For more than 10 years, the CareerLine has, provided a marketing vehicle for classified ads.

Preparation Strategies

- Virtual Community College. In collaboration with the Education Commission of the States and the League for Innovation, AACC is seeking funding for a computer program that could be used as a training tool in community college leadership programs. Virtual Community College would allow an "administrative team" to run a virtual college and experience statewide budget cuts, a faculty vote of no-confidence, and many other challenges that community college leaders face.

- Leadership Certificate Program. In progress, but as yet not totally defined.

- New Leaders Institute. Proposed academy for developing future community college leaders. The program will look at issues facing community college leaders today and will incorporate presentations by current community college leaders to provide insights about solutions.

- Presidential Leadership I: Thoughts and Clues for Aspiring Presidents (pre-convention workshop). This workshop provides valuable information about the qualifications, skills, and attributes of the successful presidential candidate as well as the successful president. It explores ways to make applications stand out, how to develop skills, how to prepare for

a successful presidency, and how to avoid common mistakes of first-time presidents.

- Presidential Leadership II: Interviewing for the Presidency (pre-convention workshop). This workshop provides a valuable simulation of the presidential interview process. Participants practice interviewing in a typical presidential-candidate, search-committee, or board-interview session, with feedback from professional search experts. Participants are encouraged to cultivate their own style and present themselves in their own unique way to capitalize on outstanding qualities that will make them a successful candidate.

Support Strategies

AACC Support Activities

- Presidents Academy Institutes. Through a series of in-service programs, the PA supports the professional development and welfare of AACC member CEOs. The institutes provide opportunities for presidents to network, exchange ideas, and express their views on a variety of issues.

- Hit the Ground Leading: A Crash Course for First-Time Presidents (pre-convention workshop). This workshop is designed for first-time CEOs still discovering the many things they never knew would be included in the president's job. Participants meet a public relations expert and learn some basics on working with the local media to ensure fair and positive coverage of their college. The workshop explores innovative ways to create a good working relationship between presidents and boards of trustees and offers suggestions for making a greater impact on the business community.

- Grow Your Own Leaders (pre-convention workshop). A number of colleges have had impressive success with college programs designed to bring out the leadership potential of existing personnel or to recruit from beyond the campus. This session focuses on successful models that are encouraging leadership development while also enhancing diversity.

- A Strategic Approach for Board Retreats (pre-convention workshop). The board retreat can be a useful tool to refocus and revitalize board members, or it can be a frustrating waste of everyone's time and energy. This preconvention workshop helps CEOs identify the elements of a well-planned retreat, provides strategies for structuring content, and targets resources for making the next board retreat dynamic, challenging, and productive.

- When Crisis Hits - And It Will (pre-convention workshop). Even before the events of September 11, many colleges were vulnerable to a variety of potential crisis threats.This session delineates the role of the CEO in a crisis, describes how to build an effective crisis management team, and presents model crisis plans that work for campus and community.

- Crisis on Campus (November 13, 2001, 90-minute teleconference). This teleconference focused on how to create the best crisis plan for a college. It covered issues such as

setting new contingencies in the wake of September 11, preventing public panic with pre-planning, choosing the crisis management team; measuring plan effectiveness; planning for mass casualties; protecting against hostile intruders; and tapping into FEMA, Red Cross, and other community resources.

AACC Publications

Community College Press Books and Monographs

- The Leadership Gap: Model Strategies for Leadership Development
- Community Building: The Community College as Catalyst
- Insider's Guide to Community College Administration
- Balancing the Presidential Seesaw
- The Knowledge Net: Connecting Communities, Learners, and Colleges
- New Expeditions Issues Papers
- Managing Your Institution's Effectiveness
- Before Crisis Hits: Building a Strategic Crisis Plan (in press)
- Managing Media Relations (in press)

AACC Research Brief Leadership Series

- No. 1: The Critical Impact of Impending Retirements on Community College Leadership, Christopher Shults, AACC. This research brief synthesized information from several sources to predict the effect of coming retirements among community college leaders including presidents, administrators, and faculty. Data indicate that these retirements will cause voids in all levels of the leadership pipeline.

- No. 2: Career Paths and Career Issues for Community College Leaders, Marilyn J. Amey and Kim E. VanDerLinden, Michigan State University. This brief examines the careers of administrative leaders who may or may not be on the path to the presidency. Although much information is available on community college presidents, relatively few studies address the lives and career paths of other administrators.

- No. 3: The Community College Presidency 2001, Iris M. Weisman, Antioch Unive.sity McGregor, and George B. Vaughan, North Carolina State University. This brief presents results of the 2001 Career and Lifestyle Survey of community college presidents. It also indicates that a growing number of presidents are planning to retire, and a relatively large percentage of presidents have held a CEO position for five years or less. In addition to information on demographics and background, this CLS also sought information about the frequency that presidents met with business and government leaders and presidents' involvement in community activities.

- No. 4: Community College Faculty Profile (in production), Christopher Shults, AACC. Based on the Department of Education's National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) surveys, this brief will present a profile of community college faculty. It will include demographic information, education levels, workload issues, institutional

satisfaction, instructional methods, and professional-development opportunities. It will provide information on part-time and full-time faculty, comparisons against four-year institutions, and trend information across three collections of NSOPF data.

- No. 5: The Institutional Context for Community College Administrators (in production), Marilyn J. Amey and Kim E. VanDerLinden, Michigan State University. This brief will focus on the rapidly changing environment for community college administrators. Changes in students and technology combined with the incorporation of new administrative offices, services, and positions have resulted in new institutional challenges for administrators.

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